

longer deposit sediment, but the sediment that was already there before we leveed the river was slowly sinking. So we have sea levels in the gulf rising 12 to 13 inches every 100 years, and we have the land sinking. You don't have to be a senior at Cal Tech to figure out we have a problem. That is why our land is washing away.

Now, why is this important?

It is obviously important for the people who live on the land that is washing away, but it is also important for America's energy independence because underneath the land that is slowly being washed into the gulf—crisscrossing that land and extending over into Texas and into Alabama—are 26,000 miles of pipelines that carry oil and natural gas that heat American homes and generate American energy. When that land washes away, those pipelines are going to be exposed.

Do you know what the saltwater is going to do to those pipelines?

It is going to corrode them. When that land washes away, those pipelines now exposed are going to be exposed to ocean currents, and they are going to burst. It will not be all at once, but they are going to burst, and this country's energy independence is going to be undermined.

Do you know how long and how much money it will take to move those pipelines?

I don't know. I am not sure if there are enough ditches to quantify it.

Let me shift gears and talk about the solution as I think I have defined the problem.

We are helping ourselves, and I will give you an example. The Morganza to the Gulf project doesn't mean a lot to some of you, but trust me—it is a big deal to the people of Louisiana and to the American people who are familiar with it. We have been taxing ourselves for 20 years to pay for that project, which is part coastal restoration and part hurricane protection. We also received help from the American people.

Thank you. Thank you, American people, for coming to our aid.

In 2006, the U.S. Congress passed what we call GOMESA. It stands for the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act. That is what I mean when I talk about GOMESA, and GOMESA is a pretty straightforward bill. It says that, for all new oil and gas drilling in the Gulf of Mexico, the Federal Government and the State government are going to share the oil royalties.

The government, as you know, owns the seabeds. We lease them to oil companies, and they drill and produce oil and natural gas. In fact, off of Louisiana's coast, we have wells that produce about 16, 17 percent of the Nation's oil and about 3 percent of the natural gas. Those oil companies pay royalties to the Federal Government, and the royalties flow through the Federal Government to the State government.

Under GOMESA, the American people, through their representatives, said: OK. On all new wells that are

drilled after 2006, Louisiana gets 37.5 percent of the money that the Federal Government gets—but not just Louisiana. We didn't want to be greedy. We asked to have Texas included. We asked to have Mississippi included. We also asked to have Alabama included so it would get 37.5 percent too. Fair is fair. The Federal Government gets the rest.

Louisianans have put their money where their mouths are. We have dedicated every single penny of that GOMESA money to coastal restoration in order to try to build up our land faster than we have been losing our land to the gulf. It has been a losing battle, but we have been holding our own. To give you an idea of how dramatic it has been, since 1930—I think 1932—Louisiana has lost land the size of Delaware. I believe, if you run the numbers in terms of square miles, we have lost land the size of two Rhode Islands. I think we have lost a football field a day. Remember, this doesn't just hurt Louisiana. This hurts America, and it hurts our energy independence.

Louisiana has put its money where its mouth is. We said: Thank you, American people, for passing GOMESA. We appreciate the 37.5 percent of the oil royalties we are going to get out of the Federal Government's share, and we are putting every single penny into coastal restoration.

There is still a basic unfairness because 20 other States get 50 percent. Now, these States aren't coastal States. I am happy for them. Don't misunderstand me. These are inland States that have Federal lands. When oil companies drill on those Federal lands and hit oil or hit natural gas, those States don't get 37.5 percent of what the Federal Government gets; they get 50 percent. That is just not fair. Everybody ought to be treated the same. Louisiana and Alabama and Mississippi and Texas are not asking for any extra. We call that lagniappe in Louisiana. We aren't asking for any extra. We are just asking to be treated like everybody else. In Louisiana, we are dedicating every single penny—I don't know if I mentioned this or not—to solving the coastal restoration problem, which is not just Louisiana's problem but is a problem for the United States.

We have a bill. It is called the COASTAL Act. The full name is the Conservation of America's Shoreline Terrain and Aquatic Life Act. We call it the COASTAL Act. All the COASTAL Act would do would be to treat all the States the same. Everybody would get 50 percent—a 50-50 split. Louisiana wouldn't get more or less than any other State. Alabama wouldn't get more or less than any other State. Mississippi wouldn't get more or less than any other State. Texas would be under the same rule. All of the States would get 50 percent.

It would also make one other change. When GOMESA was passed, it capped

the amount of money that Louisiana and Mississippi and Alabama and Texas could get each year from that 37.5 percent at \$500 million a year. Out of basic fairness, we are asking that the cap be removed if we can pass this bill, the COASTAL Act. The quarterback of the bill is the senior Senator from Louisiana, Dr. BILL CASSIDY. I am helping him all I can as are the Senators from Texas and Mississippi and Alabama and other States. All we are asking is for equality.

I don't want to end on a negative note by just talking about our problems. If you haven't visited Louisiana, please come. I have lived in five States and a foreign country. I have just never lived in a place like Louisiana. It is my home, and I know I am biased. God blessed our State, and in having blessed us, I think God blessed us a second time.

I mean, look at our location. We are at the top of the gulf coast; we are in the middle of the Gulf South; we straddle one of the mightiest rivers in the entire world. We have more oil and gas than most nations do, which we share with the American people. My people are experts in things like agriculture, aquaculture, shipbuilding, petrochemical manufacturing, oil and gas exploration, food, timber, healthcare. I could keep going. Our people are hard-working, God-fearing, and fun-loving.

I tell my friends Senator CRUZ and Senator CORNYN all the time how much I love Texas—and I do. Gosh, Texas is a great State. Every day, it seems like it wins an award. Yet I tell Senator CRUZ and Senator CORNYN—in jest, of course—look, Texas is 5½ times bigger than Louisiana, but give us credit as we are 10½ times more interesting than you are.

We are just a fun, extraordinary, diverse State, but we need some help. We are not asking for extra; we are just asking for equity. I hope this Senate, in its wisdom, will pass the COASTAL Act.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. YOUNG). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, President Trump had chance, after chance, after chance to get ahead of this coronavirus pandemic in the United States. He failed. Congress can't make the same mistakes.

Senators should not leave town. I just saw Senator MCCONNELL on the floor. It is his decision. One Senator from one State can make this decision to walk away—to fail to take care of the \$12-an-hour worker who is sick, who has to choose between going to work—perhaps getting sicker or perhaps infecting others—or staying home

and giving up her \$12-an-hour, \$96-a-day job when she struggles with her rent. We have put her in that position.

Senator MCCONNELL, who was standing right there—his office is just down the hall—could make that unilateral decision as to whether we stay and actually do the right thing. The Senate has no business leaving. We shouldn't leave town until we pass the House package to help workers and to support our communities.

President Trump needs to sign it. We need to do our jobs. We need to take care of workers who are going to need help paying their mortgage, paying their rent, and taking care of their children if schools close or they get sick.

It is really, really simple. It is why we need to pass paid sick days now and to shore up unemployment insurance funds immediately.

We know that hundreds of thousands—who knows?—millions of people are going to get laid off in the airlines, in restaurants, in hotels, in communities where they depend on these businesses to pay property tax. We know there are going to be lots of layoffs.

I am not an alarmist. I am not panicky. I think we are going to deal with this right. But we need the majority leader, Senator MCCONNELL, who sits right here and runs the Senate, who makes the decisions on whether we work or don't work, whether he sends us home or keeps us here working—Senator MCCONNELL needs to make the decision to keep us here, and as soon as the House passes this bill, the Senate takes it up.

Paid sick days are one of the most important things we can do to stop the spread of this virus. We already know that our economy is going to get hurt. We know the President of the United States judges the economy by the stock market. He is the first President I have ever seen do that, but that is beside the point. We also know that the stock market is up and down and mostly down, and investors are uneasy at best. They want more predictability, and they are not getting it. But we know the most important thing is to deal with the spread of the coronavirus. If we can't contain that, if we can't do anything about that, if we can't stop the spread of this virus, the other stuff just doesn't matter as much.

You start with the spread of this virus. The best way to stop the spread of the virus is to say to people if they are sick: You can stay home, and you can get sick pay. Every other rich country in the world provides sick pay for people who can't go to work because they are sick. It is as simple as that. If we don't pass the sick day policy, if we leave town right now, even if we come back next week, which we are not scheduled to—again, Senator MCCONNELL's decision—even if we are only gone a week, that is 5 more workdays of sick people going to work when they shouldn't, getting sicker, infect-

ing others with coronavirus or the flu or anything else, or staying home and giving up their pay, which they need to meet their rent payment. The House package takes care of this. Senators shouldn't be leaving this building until we get this help to the people we serve.

People in Ohio and people in Indiana, in the Presiding Officer's State, are scared. They are angry, and I am angry.

Many of us have been sounding the alarm for years, warning President Trump and Leader MCCONNELL, who always does President Trump's bidding, as if he doesn't even represent a State—he represents the President in this body—that the President has made us less prepared to handle a crisis like this one.

President Trump tried to gut the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health.

Think about this: The United States of America, as recently as 10 or 15 years ago, had the best public health infrastructure, the best public health safety net in the history of the world. We have the Centers for Disease Control. We have the National Institutes of Health.

In Cincinnati, we have the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health—the only one of its kind in the world—and we have our county public health departments in each of Ohio's 88 counties and all over the country.

We had the best in the world until President Trump began to try to gut the CDC and the NIH. He refused to fill key public health positions.

Most importantly—this is just unbelievable when you think about it, and I know Senator YOUNG, the Presiding Officer, had concerns about that—he got rid of the White House's entire global health security team 2 years ago. Let me repeat that. For 2 years, President Trump left us without the team that is supposed to manage pandemics. Do you know what that means? It means that there were about 40 people at the White House, led by an admiral who was an M.D.—an admiral who was also a doctor. His job was to survey the world and look around for potential illness outbreaks, to look around for potential pandemics. It might have been SARS. It might have been Ebola. It might have been a resurgence of polio. It might have been any number of things. His job at the White House—we are a rich enough country. We can do this, and we do it to protect—we care about the world. We protect our own people, although, as we see, if we don't, we see what happens. His job was to continue to look around the world and look out for these kinds of pandemics. The President fired him. The President fired the whole office. The President has never replaced them. I sent him a letter at the time, more than 600 days ago—back in May of 2018—telling him to stop dismantling our healthcare infrastructure. Now we are all paying the price for President Trump's decision. We see the real-time consequences.

This was unilateral disarmament. We unilaterally disarmed against the world's infectious diseases.

We know that international tuberculosis is a problem. We know that international HIV/AIDS is a problem. We know that international malaria is a problem. We work against those.

Do you know what? One of the things I am proudest about in our country is what we have done about public health.

We led the charge to eradicate small pox. Small pox killed hundreds of millions of people over time in this world—hundreds of millions.

We led the charge to eradicate small pox—this country did. Then we led the charge to eradicate polio all over the world. I am old enough to remember children—not children anymore—children I went to grade school with who had had polio. They were recovered, but they still limped. They still had signs of polio—not crippling signs but signs of polio. We did that.

We took on tobacco in this body—Senator DUBIN, Senator BLUMENTHAL, Senator MERKLEY, and I and others. People smoke at half the rate today than they did 50 years ago. It is starting to go back up because of e-cigarettes, but we have had huge public health victories in this country.

Do you know what? We have a President of the United States now and we have a Senate Republican leader, MITCH MCCONNELL, who—well, he certainly tried to help tobacco, but I won't even talk about that. We have a President and we have a Senate majority leader who simply did all they could to dismantle the Centers for Disease Control and NIH. They left us unprepared when the President fired the global security team at the White House that looked out for illnesses. Now we have a global pandemic on our hands.

President Trump needs to stop pretending he can lock out a disease by putting up walls at the border—that he has already allowed to spread—and he needs to start making up for all the lost time he has wasted, and so does Senator MCCONNELL.

We need to make sure we don't end up with a financial crisis on top of the public health crisis. For some of us, this feels like *deja vu*. We have been in moments like this before. We have seen the market drop. We worried about the financial system. We bailed out the banks, but we didn't do anything for the workers. That is what this body always does.

I am certain Senator MCCONNELL will get around to—and President Trump—helping corporations that have been hurt. There have been corporations that have been damaged badly—hotel chains, transportation companies, particularly airlines. They have been hurt badly by this. That part is going to get worse. I am sure they will open the public checkbook to make sure there are billions of dollars for these industries, but we shouldn't do it until we take care of the workers.

If we are going to give X number of dollars to the airlines, as we probably should, most of that money better end up in the pockets of the flight attendants, the pilots, the ticket agents, the mechanics, the baggage handlers, and all of the people who work for the airlines whom this body forgets about. Yeah, they serve us when we fly, and we don't even know their names. We probably know the CEOs' names, and we always help them, but we ought to be helping the workers.

Right now, we have a chance to stop this from spiraling out of control. We don't have another 2008 on our hands yet, but we have to act now. We don't go home for a week or two or three because Senator MCCONNELL has some whatever it is that would send us home. We need to act now. We need to make sure that we focus our efforts on preventing this virus from spreading and that we don't have one crisis—the healthcare crisis—stacked on top of an economic crisis, making the healthcare crisis worse.

We know that job is harder because of all the ways President Trump and Leader MCCONNELL have undone the many protections we put in place after the last crisis. They backed away from Wall Street reform safeguards. The President had a chance to get ahead of this virus and other public health threats, and he failed. He had a chance to get ahead of financial risks, and he failed.

Luckily, Senator MCCONNELL and the President haven't succeeded in getting rid of all of our Wall Street reform protections. They haven't succeeded in repealing the Affordable Care Act. Because of that, because of the work we did a decade ago with President Obama, we are in a better position now than we were in 2009. But we have to come together. We have to rise to this challenge. Corporate America needs to, too.

One way we can do that is to suspend these stock buybacks. Congress gave a huge tax cut to the wealthy in this country 2 years ago. Seventy percent of the benefits went to the wealthiest 1 percent.

I sat in the White House with the President and about 10 Senators. The President said: You know, everybody's pay is going to go up \$4,000, some as much as \$9,000. Those were the bookend numbers he used. He said that if we do this tax cut, it is going to trickle down and workers are going to get these raises.

Well, it didn't exactly happen that way. But do you know what did happen? After they got this tax cut, the executives started to do stock buybacks, taking money that should have been invested in workers, taking money that should have been invested in technology and upgrading their companies, but it went to executives—not exactly a shock to most of us. That is what happened.

Banks need to invest in their communities, not invest in their CEOs' stock

portfolio. Right now, JPMorgan is in the middle of an ongoing \$30 billion in stock buybacks. Wells Fargo is in the midst of a \$23 billion stock buyback, as if their executives, in all of their criminality and bad decisions, have earned it. That money would be better spent investing in small business, in medical research, and in relief for people who need help. The reason big banks are supposed to have that money is so that they keep lending and keep communities afloat when we have crises like this.

It is time for all of us to come together in the Senate, in the White House, in the communities across the country, and, yes, on Wall Street. That means we don't leave this building until we have done everything we need to do to get this epidemic under control, to get our communities the testing capacity and tools they need to manage this crisis, and to support the workers who are going to get hurt.

Leader MCCONNELL's responsibility—I don't care how he votes in the end—is to make the decision to put the House bill on the floor so we can vote on it, and President Trump, the day he gets it, needs to sign it.

Let's get help to the people we serve—not next week, not 2 weeks from now, not tomorrow; let's do it today.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF JAMES P. DANLY

Mr. MANCHIN. Mr. President, I will be voting to confirm Mr. Danly's nomination to be a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. I am doing so because I believe he is well qualified for the job. He has been the Commission's general counsel for the past 2½ years. He understands the complex legal issues that come before the Commission.

I voted to report Mr. Danly's nomination, both last November and again last week, on the strength of his qualifications, not on politics. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

The position to which Mr. Danly has been nominated is one of five seats on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. By law, no more than three of the five seats can be held by one party. Only three of the seats are now filled—two by Republicans and one by a Democrat. The other Democratic seat has been vacant since last August.

Traditionally, when both a Republican seat and a Democratic seat have been vacant, past Presidents have sent nominations to fill both at the same time. I am deeply disappointed that this has not happened this time. The politics involved in this town are outrageous. It is truly outrageous that even proper decorum, simple civility,

and just a little bit of procedure are not even considered anymore.

The White House has had a highly qualified candidate to fill the Democratic seat for over a year, who has been totally vetted and has gone through all the processes that we have, but the President and his staff have still not sent us her nomination. I think they are scared. I hear this because she is a very, very bright, very smart, very articulate, and very intelligent person. She knows the issues, and she is well respected in her field.

By breaking the longstanding practice of pairing nominations and not sending us a nomination for the Democratic seat, the administration undermines the bipartisan structure of the Commission. I made a commitment to Mr. Danly that I would support his nomination because he is well qualified, and I will honor that commitment and vote to confirm him. Two wrongs don't make a right here, but this has got to stop.

Both sides have to stand up and say: Mr. President, this is a tradition. This is what we do. This is customary of what has been done, and it gives us a five-member FERC, which is extremely important for energy in our country and the reliability that we depend on.

But as I told my colleagues on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, when we voted on Mr. Danly's nomination, I will not support another nominee unless we get both. This has to stop, and I am asking my colleagues on the Republican side to please help us with some kind of structure and some kind of procedure back into the operation. We need to start acting as a Senate and not be guided by the politics—the toxic politics—and this tribal mentality. I want the President to send us the nominations so we can have a fully functioning committee.

So with that, I ask all of my colleagues, please, let's vote for the qualifications of the person, not the politics of the person. Also, let's make sure we have a complete, working Commission and not just a partial Commission that is overweighted.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Danly nomination?

Mr. MANCHIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. SCOTT).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Washington (Ms. CANTWELL), the Senator from Minnesota